

NATIONAL ENDOWMENT for the ARTS

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CREATIVE FORCES



**GROWING THROUGH COVID:
LESSONS LEARNED**

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Below are the top five lessons learned by Community Connection Partners while moving their Creative Forces programs to virtual platforms during COVID.

What seems impossible is possible.

- Pivoting to virtual or hybrid seems daunting, but as much as you think, “We can’t do this,” you can.
- Develop professional survival skills by becoming Zoom savvy for meetings, webinars, recordings, using multiple cameras, and Facebook Live from Zoom.

What’s doable is better than what’s ideal.

- Start out simple then expand your programs as your skills for virtual expand.
- Check your assumptions about what you think participants will and will not do online.
- Use the strengths of virtual media to create an engaging experience different from the in-person experience that is feasible for time and budget.

Flexibility and creativity are your friends.

- Things keep changing. What worked last year or yesterday may not work tomorrow. Remain flexible to changing participant needs, participation rates, participant locations, and schedules.
- People are willing to try new things—and those will change over time. Listen to what people are saying and be open to continuously changing your programming and schedules.
- Some teaching artists can pivot to virtual teaching, others cannot. Work with teaching artists to build their skills in remote learning and creating conversations and community in the remote space.
- Not everyone is open to taking online classes. And that’s ok.

Regularity and quantity matter, especially communications.

- Communication style, content, and frequency are different for virtual platforms. Have multiple forms of communication that are relevant—email, text, Facebook groups, and other social media.
- Send reminders and instructions for getting online more than once; have someone to help with digital literacy skills at each class.
- Remember time zone differences and include zones on communications.
- Virtual expands your reach nationally. Leverage that national network.

We are human.

- Slow down, remember self-care.
- Creating safe online spaces may mean not recording classes. Listen to participants.
- Staff and participant health is more important than delivering programs.